

Headteacher: Andrew Denham

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Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Dear Parents,

Over the last couple of weeks, we have had a number of problems related to mobile phone use outside of school, that has carried over into school time. These issues are impacting on the children's ability to focus on their work successfully and their emotional well-being in school. The concerns have arisen in Year 5&6 between individuals and groups of children (*and we would like to avoid it spilling down into Year 4*).

In the last couple of weeks, I have had the following things brought to my attention:

- Children discussing (openly) in a group chat who likes or doesn't like each other
- Children setting up separate groups to deliberately exclude someone, and telling them
- Children comparing other children to unkind 'memes'
- Children being concerned about leaving a group because of what others will say
- Children sharing videos and messages that are worrying their peers
- Children turning off their phone at 9pm and waking up to 200 messages the next morning

We know it is not our place to tell families how to manage their child's phone usage but feel that we need to start working together more closely if we are going to avoid situations in school where groups of children have either fallen out because of something unkind that has been said in a message or being worried about something a peer has said or done and then shared it. It is impacting on some children's learning.

Here are some suggested things we think would be helpful for parents do with their children:

- Monitor their child's phone regularly to check the messages they are sending, sharing and receiving.
- Encouraging their child to tell them when they receive an image or message that upsets them.
- Consider the time of the evening when your child comes off their phone.

*Sometimes peer pressure stops children from saying something in the group message that they think may be upsetting. We have discussed this with the children in Year 5 & 6 and agreed on the following combination of emoji's they will use if they are not feeling comfortable about what is being said or done. If the two emoji's are used in this sequence, the group agrees to stop any further discussion until the following day when the issue can be discussed in person. If this is not respected by the group, parents of those affected and school will work together to address it.*



These approaches are not going to totally solve what is going to be an ongoing issue for our children, but we hope that it may do something to reduce the number of incidents at home that are needing to be dealt with in school.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Andrew Denham